A Case of Transatlantic Intertextuality: Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Edgar Allan Poe

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The American scholar Burton R. Pollin established literary connections between Edgar Allan Poe and the Victorian English writer Edward Bulwer--Lytton, tracing the influence the latter exerted over many of Poe's tales (1965; 1996; 2000). Similarly, Allan Conrad Christensen stated that Bulwer-Lytton was one of the writers that had exerted a most powerful influence on Poe's early prose (2004). Moreover, as a literary critic, Poe also reviewed many of Bulwer-Lytton's novels and declared himself an admirer of the English writer (1835; 1836; 1840; 1841a; 1841b; 1842). In 1830, when Poe was expelled from West Point Academy, Bulwer-Lytton was already a highly acclaimed writer about to publish *Paul Clifford*; the novel that inaugurated his cycle of Newgate fiction which incorporated the novelty of featuring a criminal as the hero of the story. This characteristic would be widely displayed in many of Edgar Allan Poe's subsequent short-stories such as "The Tell-Tale Heart", "The Black Cat", "The Imp of the Perverse", or "The Cask of Amontillado." Taking these precedents into consideration, this article aims at gaining insight into the intertextuality established between Edward Bulwer-Lytton and Edgar Allan Poe, identifying thematic links and disparities through a comparative analysis of Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* and Edgar Allan Poe's tales, as well as examining the idiosyncratic characteristics which differentiate the novel and the short-story in nineteenth-century England and America.

1. Intertextuality between Bulwer-Lytton and Poe

Except for critics such as Burton Pollin, Allan Conrad Christensen and George H. Spies, not many scholars have profusely contemplated any literary connection between Poe and Bulwer-Lytton. Pollin referred to several

thematic links that could be established between Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" and Bulwer-Lytton's shorter piece "Monos and Daimonos" (1965), and he also analysed the influence Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi* exerted over many of Poe's tales (1996). It is also acknowledged that not only had Poe read some of Bulwer-Lytton's novels but he had also perused some of his allegedly lesser-known writings. As regards Poe's review of Bulwer-Lytton's *Rienzi*, published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* in February 1836, the American writer stated that

> we have long learned to reverence the fine intellect of Bulwer. We take up any production of his pen with a positive certainty that, in reading it, the wildest passions of our nature, the most profound of our thoughts, the brightest visions of our fancy, and the most ennobling and lofty of our aspirations will, in due turn, be enkindled within us. We feel sure of rising from the perusal a wiser if not a better man. In no instance are we deceived (198).

Nonetheless, not all of Poe's reviews were positive. Poe also evaluated Bulwer-Lytton's gothic novel *Night and Morning* in *Graham's Magazine* in April 1841, claiming that

> in regard to *Night and Morning* we cannot agree with that critical opinion which considers it the best novel of its author. It is only not his worst. It is not as good as *Eugene Aram*, nor as *Rienzi* – and is not at all comparable with *Ernest Maltravers.* Upon the whole it is a good book. It merits beyond doubt overbalance its defects, and if we have not dwelt upon the former with as much unction as upon the latter, it is because the Bulwerian beauties are precisely of that secondary character which never fails of the fullest public appreciation (197).

Through his "Review of *The Critical and Miscellaneous Writings of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton*", published in *Graham's Magazine* in November 1841, Poe seems to reach a balance as regards his views on the Victorian writer stating that

> Mr. Bulwer is *never* lucid, and seldom profound. His intellect [is] rather well balanced than lofty – rather comprehensive than penetrative. His taste is exquisite. His style, in its involution and obscurity, partakes of the involution of his thoughts. Apart from his mere intellect, however,- or rather as a portion of that intellect – we recognize in his every written word the keenest appreciation of the right, the beautiful and the true. Thus he is a man worthy of all reverence, and we do not hesitate to say that we look upon the charges of immoral tendency which have been so pertinaciously adduced against his fictions, as absurdly *little* and untenable, in the mass (no page).

Furthermore, there are other reviews of Bulwer-Lytton's works which have been attributed to Poe by different scholars. In his article "Bulwer-Lytton's Influence on Poe's Works and Ideas, Especially for an Author's 'Preconceived Design'", Burton R. Pollin considers Poe the reviewer of Bulwer-Lytton's *Zanoni* in *Graham's Magazine* in June 1842. A notice of Bulwer-Lytton's *The Student*, published in the *American and Daily Advertiser* in July 1835, was also

tentatively ascribed to Poe by T. O. Mabbott in his article "A Few Notes on Poe", published in 1920. Furthermore, an especially unkind review of Bulwer-Lytton, entitled "Bulwer Used Up", published in the *Alexander's Weekly Messenger* in May 1840, was attributed to Poe by Clarence S. Brigham in *Edgar Allan Poe's Contributions to Alexander's Weekly Messenger*, published in 1943. Moreover, Poe referred to Bulwer-Lytton through some of his letters, such as the one addressed to T. H. White, thus showing his reaction to Bulwer-Lytton's publication of his ghost story "The Haunted and the Haunters", highlighting "the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque; the fearful coloured into the horrible; the witty exaggerated into the burlesque; the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical […] You may say this is bad taste. I have my doubts about it" (Mulvey-Roberts, 'Edward Bulwer-Lytton' 86).

In spite of Poe's ever-changing appreciation of Bulwer-Lytton's works, it is undeniable that not only had the American author read many of the Victorian writer's novels but he also appreciated and esteemed Bulwer-Lytton's style on numerous occasions, as the excerpts quoted above corroborate. In any case, despite their different financial circumstances and national origins, both authors examined similar lines of fiction during their productive years. Tenets of Bulwer-Lytton's early Newgate fiction resemble Poe's gothic tales, Bulwer-Lytton's historical romances find their counterpart in Poe's taste for the classics, Bulwer-Lytton's late domestic novels bear some resemblance to some of Poe's more bucolic tales such as "Landor's Cottage", and some of Poe's most well-known gothic pieces are often remindful of Bulwer-Lytton's occult and metaphysical novels.

Throughout Poe's evaluation of Bulwer-Lytton's novels, the American author praised the English Victorian writer's themes and ideas, but disagreed with his treatment. In this respect, George H. Spies lists a series of Bulwer-Lytton's features that Poe regarded as some of the Victorian's writer most remarkable weaknesses. First of all, Poe disliked the extensive length of Bulwer-Lytton's novels, claiming that "narratives, even one-fourth as long as the one now lying upon our table [*Night and Morning],* are essentially inadapted to that nice and complex adjustment of incident at which he [Bulwer-Lytton] has made this desperate attempt" (Spies 3). Moreover, Poe refers to the disunity of place that characterises Bulwer's novels stating that the author [Bulwer-Lytton] "floundered 'in the vain attempt to keep all his multitudinous incidents at one and the same moment before the eye'" (3). On the other hand, Poe praised Bulwer-Lytton's style, but complained about his language and his complex mode of expression, which led Poe to admit that "beauty of simplicity is not that which can be appreciated by Mr. Bulwer-Lytton" (4). Moreover, Spies also remarks that Poe despised Bulwer-Lytton's use of melodrama, arguing that the "refined and delicate sensibilities of the characters populating his

[Bulwer-Lytton's] esteemed romantic novels are obviously much too acute for Poe's critical taste" (4). Poe also referred to Bulwer-Lytton's excessive use of the metaphor, claiming, as Spies points out, that he "could not 'express a dozen consecutive sentences in an honest manly manner'" (4). Finally, Spies also mentions Poe's significant reference to Bulwer-Lytton's suspected literary theft stating that "his novels are all echoes" (5). In any case, despite Poe's remarks about Bulwer-Lytton's weaknesses, Spies admits that the American author was "still greatly enamoured of Bulwer-Lytton as an author" (4) and concludes stating that

> it should be made clear that Poe did not end his days as a literary critic altogether negating the artistry of the man he had at first so highly and unreservedly praised. Although his flattering estimation of Bulwer-Lytton modified considerably on specific points after 1836 and later became what a modern reader would consider more realistic, Poe continued to feel that there were 'many fine thoughts' in Bulwer-Lytton's novels and that his works should always be considered a 'valuable addition to our imaginative literature' (6).

Consequently, in Spies' words, as opposed to Poe "Edward Bulwer-Lytton is perhaps one of the finest examples of a literary figure who was greatly revered during his lifetime and almost completely forgotten after it" (1). Similarly, Mulvey-Roberts admits that Bulwer-Lytton's fiction "was read almost as widely as that of his fellow novelist and close friend Charles Dickens [while] at the present time in his native Great Britain, however, almost all of his novels are out of print" ("Fame, Notoriety and Madness" 115-6). In any case, Bulwer-Lytton was a man of his time, representative of the Victorian mindset and compromised with his own society; an aristocrat capable of advocating for social reform while acknowledging the hidden satisfactions of Victorian injustice (Lane 615); a writer capable of providing an exhaustive realistic portrait of Victorian society, while becoming increasingly concerned with theosophical and occult issues. In any case, as Leslie Mitchell concedes, Bulwer-Lytton was a multi-faceted character (xv), as his fiction examined a wide scope of thematic issues, from domestic novels to Newgate texts, ranging from gothic fiction to romantic tales.

2. Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* and the influence of the Newgate novel over Poe's tales

Paul Clifford was Bulwer-Lytton's fifth novel, written when he was twenty-eight and published in three volumes in 1830. According to Campbell, "the first edition, the largest printing of any modern novel up to that time, sold all its copies the first day" (38), becoming an immediate commercial success. After leaving behind his early novels of Byronic apprenticeship, *Paul Clifford*

inaugurated the series of Bulwer-Lytton's four crime novels, acknowledged as the precedents of Newgate fiction. In Campbell's view, this newly established genre was different from other crime works such as the gothic novels, the picaresque and rogue stories, or the romantic accounts of banditry, because in Newgate fiction, the hero who took the lead was the criminal himself (38). The types of criminals that usually populated Newgate novels were middle-class stock swindlers, common housebreakers, humble servants that robbed their employers, or highwaymen, the so-called 'aristocrats of crime', and it is precisely the highwayman type to which the hero, Paul Clifford, belongs.

Hollingsworth designed a three-partite thematic variant which can be applied to the difficulties these criminal-heroes must face. They can be either the object of a search in an exciting chase-adventure, a representative victim of social evils in a problem novel calling for legal or social reforms, or even the subject of a moral or psychological case study in a story examining criminal motivation (14). Definitely, Paul Clifford belongs to Hollingsworth's second type, as he perfectly embodies Rousseau's romantic archetype of the *noble savage*, whose inherent innocence is disrupted by social corruption and turns him into a victim of the system in a novel which calls for social reform. Actually, of all of Bulwer-Lytton's crime novels, *Paul Clifford* is not only the first to inaugurate this series, but it is also the piece which more likely resembles the novel of purpose, echoing Bulwer-Lytton's mostly admired writer William Godwin, as it seeks to effect a change in the legal system. Actually, as Worthington asserts, "Paul Clifford […] is criminalized by the system intended to prevent crime" (59). In the preface of the 1840 edition, Bulwer-Lytton himself mentioned the two purposes he endeavoured to fulfil through *Paul Clifford*:

> First, to draw attention to two errors in our penal institutions […] the habit of corrupting the boy by the very punishment that ought to redeem him, and then hanging the man, at the first occasion, as the easiest way of getting rid of our own blunders. […] A second and a lighter object in the novel "Paul Clifford" (and hence the introduction of a semi-burlesque or travesty in the earlier chapters) was to show that there is nothing essentially different between vulgar vice and fashionable vice – and that the slang of the one circle is but an easy paraphrase of the cant of the other (Bulwer-Lytton v).

Therefore, Bulwer-Lytton claimed that it is often the environment and circumstance that combine to create a criminal so that it is necessary to mend the circumstance to redeem the criminal as opposed to mending the criminal to inflict the law, as the legal system has traditionally defended. Moreover, at another level, Campbell even goes further and describes *Paul Clifford* as "a *roman à clef* political burlesque, part satire and part allegory, that suggests that politicians are no better than thieves" (40).

Bulwer-Lytton focuses on the social evils that led his hero to resort to crime. Paul, orphaned at an early age, is raised by his drunken foster mother, Margery Peg Lobkins and her pickpocket friend, Dummie Dunnaker. Paul spends his early years at the Mug – an inn kept by mother Lobkins – which many London criminals use as a meeting place. Fascinated by the splendidly attired highwaymen, their humour and their pretensions to gentility, Paul gets acquainted with the highwayman Augustus Tomlinson. On one occasion, Paul is falsely arrested, charged as a pickpocket, and as a result, he is sentenced to three months in a house of correction. Nevertheless, Paul manages to escape from prison with Tomlinson, and he joins him to rob a farmer and secure food and clothing. Actually, convinced that he will no longer be able to return to a life of respectability, this is the first criminal act that Paul commits. He assumes the alias of Captain Lovett and becomes the leader of his own gang of highwaymen. At the same time, Paul, due to the early instruction he received from his tutor Peter Mac Grawler, is enabled to lead a genteel life as a fashionable man of the town, calling himself Captain Clifford then. Paul's dual existence, as a highwayman and as a fashionable figure, leads Bulwer-Lytton to remark that there is not such an enormous distance between vulgar and high-class vice. In any case, at a ball, Paul meets Lucy, the daughter of the wealthy country squire, Joseph Brandon. Urged on by his love for her, Paul resolves to abandon crime and begin an honest life. Nevertheless, Paul and his band are captured while committing a robbery and Paul is tried by Judge William Brandon, Lucy's uncle, who plans to marry his niece to Lord Mauleverer. Brandon pronounces the sentence – death by hanging – while he discovers Paul to be his own son, whom he repudiated when he discovered his wife's adultery. Eventually, Brandon gets Paul's sentence commuted to transportation to Australia. Nonetheless, Paul escapes and joins Lucy in America, where he begins an honest and successful life.

Paul Clifford was published for the first time in 1830, when Poe was only twenty-one years of age. Thematically and stylistically, Bulwer-Lytton's novel contains many of the features that would subsequently echo in Poe's tales. In terms of plot, Poe's "The Pit and the Pendulum" is apparently the tale that most closely resembles the situation depicted in Bulwer-Lytton's novel in which a criminal-victim faces his own condemnation. Nevertheless, the treatment of the apparently same theme is rendered in a significantly different manner in both texts. Bulwer-Lytton's novel focuses on the causes that lead an innocent man to crime, while Poe's tale rather deals with the excruciating circumstances the condemned man is obliged to face. In his essay "On Art in Fiction" (1838), Bulwer-Lytton remarked that "in the delineation of a criminal, the author will take care to show us the motives of the crimes" (Worthington 54). In "The Pit and the Pendulum," although he never mentions the circumstances that led

to his imprisonment, the narrator refers to the "sentence – the dread sentence of death – [which] was the last of distinct accentuation which reached [his] ears" (Poe, *The Complete Tales* 246). Similarly, Paul Clifford also bears witness to Judge Brandon's reading of his sentence to death, and it is mentioned how "as these dread words struck upon his ear, slowly the prisoner rose" (Bulwer-Lytton 388), so that the development of the legal case which brings about the criminal's final punishment, rather than its agonizing effects, acquires a major prominence in Bulwer-Lytton's novel.

Despite the allegedly emphasis on social order that often characterises the Victorian novel, *Paul Clifford* precisely inaugurates a sub-genre in which the main character is a criminal, that is, a social outcast. As stated before, many of Poe's gothic tales also share this central feature. However, Bulwer-Lytton is very careful to remark that Paul is merely a highwayman, not a murderer, and as such, he is not to blame as he is merely a victim of his circumstances. Moreover, as Conrad Christensen argues, Paul Clifford also has a creative vein, resembling the Romantic hero, as "he uses the sword and pistol not only in his exciting adventures as swashbuckling highwayman but also in an interestingly figurative sense as man of letters" (60). Likewise, he goes on to ascertain that "highway robbery becomes an especially exquisite form of chivalry, and the novel propounds, as one of its major themes, the notion that criminals are really no worse than lawyers and politicians" (60).

Through his tales, Poe is not generally concerned with the reason why his characters feel the impulse to murder, since he is mainly interested in the act itself, and the viciously psychological thoughts and feelings that overwhelm the individual, instead of the causes that originated them. Moreover, in Bulwer-Lytton's novel, even though Paul is a criminal, he is not alone, since he leads his band of criminals in addition to the fact that, due to his alter ego, he is warmly welcomed in the elegant gatherings of the upper-class society. Thus, Paul is both an outcast and an exponent of society. This duality in the main character is not frequently found in Poe's tales, in which the criminal is only capable of despicable actions and his behaviour is never judged. Nevertheless, this duality is translated to the readership, since the fact that the figure of the criminal and the narrator often coincide inevitably leads the reader to establish an ambiguous relationship with the criminal narrator. Similarly, one of Poe's mainly acclaimed characters, Auguste Dupin, bears some resemblance with Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* precisely with regard to this ambiguity. Clifford is described as "a youth of high spirit, and though he was warm-hearted […], yet he was rough in temper, and not constantly smooth in speech" (Bulwer-Lytton 39-40). As for his origins, Clifford is Judge William Brandon's legitimate lost son who fell in disgrace after his mother's dissolute behaviour. Similarly, Poe describes Auguste Dupin as a "young

gentleman of an excellent, indeed of an illustrious family, but, by a variety of untoward events, had been reduced to such poverty that the energy of his character succumbed beneath it, and he ceased to bestir himself in the world, or to care for the retrieval of his fortunes" (Poe, *The Complete Tales* 143).

In addition to Paul Clifford's both noble origins and dubious life, he also entertains another type of explicit duality through his post as the leader of the highwaymen and his wish to enter high society to gain Lucy Brandon's love. William Wilson is precisely the character whose duality acquires more prominence in Poe's tales. In the tale, Wilson finally manages to kill his alter ego, while in Bulwer-Lytton's novel, the genteel Paul Clifford and the unlawful Captain Lovett are also the same person despite the fact it is Paul who eventually remains. Despite Paul's dual relationship with society, he shares some degree of the loneliness and aloofness that can be often ascribed to Poe's characters. At the very beginning of Bulwer-Lytton's novel, which has become specially popular as one of the allegedly worst beginnings in fiction, Bulwer-Lytton describes Dummie Dunnaker in the following terms: "Through one of the obscurest quarters of London, and among haunts little loved by the gentlemen of the police, a man, evidently of the lowest orders, was wending his solitary ways" (Bulwer-Lytton 1). To some extent, this descriptive approach is remindful of Poe's "The Man in the Crowd", when the narrator scrutinises the different social groups. It is worth noticing that, as regards the band of the pickpockets, Poe's narrator concedes

> there were many individuals of dashing appearance, whom I easily understood as belonging to the race of swell pick-pockets, with which all great cities are infested. I watched these gentry with much inquisitiveness, and found it difficult to imagine how they should ever be mistaken for gentlemen by gentlemen themselves. Their voluminousness of wristband, with an air of excessive frankness, should betray them at once (*The Complete Tales* 477).

Poe's reference as regards the difficulty in distinguishing pickpockets from gentlemen is remarkably significant and explicitly evocative. Furthermore, the reversal of roles between criminals and gentlemen is often found throughout Bulwer-Lytton's novel. Paul, an alleged criminal, is of good nature, while Judge William Brandon, a member of the upper social class, constantly entertains the hope of becoming rich through his niece's marriage to a noble man. The issue of not taking for granted people's nature through their appearance is also often explored in Poe's tales as is the case with "The System of Doctor Tarr and Professor Fether", whereby it is eventually discovered that the polite managers of the asylum are actually its own insane residents, thus illustrating this exchange of roles once more.

Moreover, through Poe's denominated 'marriage tales', the widower and narrator often describes the death of his late wife, quoting her very

same words, while he bears witness to the gradual transformation of his young daughter into his late aged wife. In the initial chapters of *Paul Clifford*, Dummie assists Paul's foster mother, Margery Lobkins, on her deathbed. While beholding her infant, Margery Lobkins wishes he was different from his despicable father (Brandon), while she ascertains the child has his very same features, exclaiming: "You have his eyes, – you have! Out with them, out! The devil sits laughing in them!" (Bulwer-Lytton 14), which bears a particular resemblance with Poe's "Ligeia" and the narrator's mesmerised state with her eyes. Moreover, in Bulwer-Lytton's novel, Margery swears to haunt Dummie in case he ever reveals to her child the identity of his father. The death of the mother figure thus acquires a special transcendence in both texts.

It is also worth noticing that when Margery is about to die, the narrator draws our attention towards the "large gray cat, curled in a ball, […] with half-shut eyes, and ears that now and then denoted, by a gentle inflection, the jar of a louder or nearer sound than usual upon her lethargic senses" (Bulwer-Lytton 14). In Poe's tale "The Black Cat", there is a kind of implicit parallelism set between Pluto and the narrator's wife since, wanting to strike the cat, the narrator ultimately strikes his wife. Furthermore, in Margery's sick chamber, there is "a watch, the regular and calm click of which produced that indescribably painful feeling which, we fear, many of our readers who have heard the sound in a sick chamber can easily recall" (Bulwer-Lytton 13). This image is also remindful of Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" in which, once the murder of the old man has taken effect, the guilty narrator confesses "there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton" (Poe, *The Complete Tales* 305). These references exemplify the numerous intertextual links which can be identified between Bulwer-Lytton's novel and several of Poe's subsequent tales.

Furthermore, Paul's first coming out in society bears some resemblance with Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death". Despite the fact that Paul is presumed to belong to the gentlemen of society, nobody knows his real identity, and so said the schematic journal entry of the following day after the gathering: "Mysterious affair, – person lately going about, – first houses – most fashionable parties – nobody knows – Duke of Dashwell's yesterday. Duke not like to make disturbance – as royalty present" (Bulwer-Lytton 82-3). As if wearing his mask of gentility, the highwaymen Captain Lovett, otherwise known as Clifford in society's highest spheres, comes out at a ball. As in Bulwer-Lytton's novel, society cannot prevent an outcast from entering their luxurious gathering, in Poe's tale, Prince Prospero cannot avoid the Red Death entering his sumptuous palace when "before the last echoes of the last chime had utterly sunk into silence, there were many individuals in the crowd who had found leisure to become aware of the presence of a masked

figure which had arrested the attention of no single individual before" (Poe, *The Complete Tales* 272). It is precisely at this ball that Paul encounters Lucy Brandon, the young beauty he had previously beheld at the theatre. The description of this previous encounter is again reminiscent of Poe's grotesque tale "The Spectacles", in which the narrator falls in love with Madame Lalande despite his short-sightedness, precisely while attending a play at the theatre.

In Bulwer-Lytton's novel, Paul is instructed to become a professional writer by the editor Peter Mac Grawler. His advice as to how to write in order to be published in his periodical "The Asinaeum" bears some resemblance with Mr.Blackwood's teaching Miss Psyche Zenobia in Poe's sarcastic piece entitled "How to Write a Blackwood Article". As Paul prefers Romance to Epics and Philosophy, he tells Mac Grawler "I should never be able to read an epic in twelve books, and I should fall asleep in the first page of the Inquiry" (48). As opposed to Mac Grawler, who encourages Paul to write 'serious' and classic literature, in Poe's tale, Mr. Blackwood urges Zenobia to be original and aim at sensational writings claiming that "sensations are the great things after all. Should you ever be drowned or hung, be sure and make a note of your sensations – they will be worth to you ten guineas a sheet. If you wish to write forcibly, Miss Zenobia, pay minute attention to the sensations" (Poe, *The Complete Tales* 341). Thus, both characters in these two texts also share their interest in writing.

3. Some notes on the short-story and the novel as transatlantic literary genres

In addition to being one of the most acknowledged masters of the short-story, Poe was also one of the first to theorise about this literary genre. In his "Review of *Twice-Told Tales"*, Poe defined some of the tenets related to the short-story which have become canonical through time. It is particularly meaningful to notice that he described the features of the short-story as opposed to those attached to other genres such as the poem or the novel. He stated how "the unity of effect or impression is a point of the greatest importance [and how] this unity cannot be thoroughly preserved in productions whose perusal cannot be completed at one sitting" (Poe, 'Review' 46). In this respect, Poe objected to the novel mainly because of its length which "deprives itself of the immense force derivable from totality" (Poe, 'Review' 47). Thus, he favoured the tale instead of the poem or the novel because it is through it that "the author is enabled to carry out the fullness of his intention [and it is during the hour of its perusal that] the soul of the reader is at the writer's control" (Poe, 'Review' 47). Poe also argued that because of what he called "the preestablished design", the tale allows the reader "a sense of the fullest

satisfaction" (Poe, 'Review' 48), which cannot be attributed to the novel, in which "worldly interests intervening during the pauses of perusal, modify, annul, or counteract, in a greater or less degree, the impressions of the book" (Poe, 'Review' 47). As regards the purpose, Poe concedes "truth is often […] the aim of the tale" (Poe, 'Review' 48), and as opposed to the poem, the prose tale amalgamates "a vast variety of modes or inflections of thought and expression" (Poe, 'Review' 48). All of Poe's tenets as regards the short story are applicable to the thematic transposition from novel to tale on which this article focuses, precisely because Poe was concerned with defining the main features of the tale as opposed to those that characterised other genres. In any case, the most idiosyncratic feature attached to the tale is its unity of effect, or using Reid's terminology, "the unity of impression" (54).

According to Shaw, "[i]f this is so, then narrative method [in the short-story] is likely to be strung to a correspondingly high pitch" (49). This seems particularly true of Poe's story "The Pit and the Pendulum", which he completed by the summer of 1842. Shaw goes on to define Poe's tale as "the most celebrated instance of narrative wrenched away from the gradually emerging patternings characteristic of longer fiction" (49). Through "The Pit and the Pendulum", we gradually discover that the nameless narrator is imprisoned as a victim of the Spanish Inquisition, although we never discover the reason for his imprisonment. As opposed to this, the uncommitted theft which ultimately leads to Paul Clifford's undeserved incarceration serves the purpose of highlighting the inappropriateness of the English Penal Code to question, by extension, the effectiveness of the current English system of justice. Thus, the underlying basis of Bulwer-Lytton's novel is the development of a thesis, whereas Poe focuses on the effect his tale attains, and it is to that purpose that in "The Pit and the Pendulum", Poe "eliminates variables of time, character and the outside world, choosing instead to deepen progressively an initial impression of terror" (Shaw 50).

While reading through Bulwer-Lytton's novel, one often feels the "gratifying sensation that we are accompanying characters in a journey from which some knowledge is to be gained" (Hernáez 13), whereas Poe's tales often lead us to the uncertain feeling that reality proves intelligible and overwhelming. Bulwer-Lytton's detailed account of Poe's similar theme gives us a sense of order and control over reality. On the other hand, most of Poe's tales rather focus on the intense grip produced on the reader. Thus, not only the treatment but also the aim differs from novel to tale. Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford* provides the illusion of completeness and continuity through the generous amount of information allowed by its length. Poe's tales sacrifice the richness of characterisation and exhaustive information for the sake of the last turn. As María Jesús Hernáez states "the ending in the short story

is not exclusion, but inclusion" (30). The ending of Bulwer-Lytton's novel is an epilogue rather than a conclusion, whereas with Poe's tales, especially in the case of "The Pit and the Pendulum", the final salvation of the tormented narrator reveals a trick or surprise ending. In other words, Poe's tales open possibilities at the end, Bulwer-Lytton's novel closes them.

In addition, Poe's tales focus on a single centre of interest, while Bulwer-Lytton's novel develops a different focus of attention through a series of episodes, that is, Bulwer-Lytton's novel masters the continuity, while Poe's tales rather master the instant. Through all of Poe's tales, a concentration, a reduction of spatial and temporal scope is conveyed, "starting from the assumption that the short story develops an idea and the novel a process" (Hernáez 36). As pointed out before, Poe's tales usually exclude variables of causality and context for the sake of effect. Through Bulwer-Lytton's *Paul Clifford*, the centre of attention constantly shifts from one place to another, from Paul's stylish society to Captain Lovett's reprobate endeavours. Paul develops through the novel as a character, conveying a sense of gradual passage of time, whereas in Poe's tales the rhythm is usually hectic and moves forward towards its own *dénouement.* Bulwer-Lytton's novel provides us with accurate portraits and exhaustive descriptions, whereas some carefully selected traits are enough to describe Poe's characters. In any case, as Friedman has argued, the fact that "a short story cannot deal with the growth of character, as has also been frequently done" (132) should be defied. There is, though, a generic difference in the approach to description. Characterisation tends to be more visual in Bulwer-Lytton, who generally focuses on the appearance of the characters, while Poe is rather concerned with describing their sensations, or even, referring to some physical traits in order to describe their inner nature.

Taking into consideration these different variables that characterise both Bulwer-Lytton's novel and Poe's tales, the effect on the reader is also worth remarking. In this respect, it has often been argued that

> the main aim of the novel is apparently to 'satisfy' the reader with fiction. The reader of short stories, in contrast, is led to ponder on the meaning of what has been presented. Reading a novel involves primarily identification, reading a short story involves primarily reflection. The first is based on expectation and recognition, the second is a pact between showing and discovering (Hernáez 47).

Bulwer-Lytton's novel follows, using Bates' terminology, the accepted convention of explaining everything, which characterised the nineteenth-century novel (Hernáez 48). Thus, *Paul Clifford*, despite inaugurating Bulwer-Lytton's series of Newgate crime novels, provides the reader with certainty and guidance through its lengthy narration. Poe's tales, through their brevity to be perused at one sitting and their necessarily fragmented nature, cause

the opposite effect. In this respect, Bulwer-Lytton's novel accounts for a social portrait of reality, even if from its margins, whereas Poe's tales offer an exposition of a particular perception of reality, moving towards subjectivity. The Victorian novel provided a well-rounded and completed narration, through linearity, as if resembling a sphere, "a short-story's end is in its beginning" (Hunter 138). *Paul Clifford* focuses on complexity and redundancy, whereas Poe's tales dwell on a limited amount of information and limiting viewpoint. In that respect, Nadine Gordimer has argued that, even though the novel offers a more generous portrait of reality, it is through the short story that "experience is more truthfully conveyed" (Hernáez 54), since in real life, we hardly ever have the sense of exerting a total control over our own reality. On the other hand, the particular vision and detached nature often attached to the short-story have traditionally defined it as a suitable form for the fantastic. It seems plausible that the intensiveness and symbolic nature of Poe's tales are better achieved through the short story. Actually, as Rohberger points out,

> The short story derives from the romantic tradition. The metaphysical view that there is more to the world than that which can be apprehended through the senses provides the rationale for the structure of the short story which is the vehicle for the author's probing of the nature of the real (81).

It has often been argued that the short story technique differs significantly from that of the novel because "the information provided in the short story does not originate from rationality, but from perception of the senses" (Hernáez 41). In any case, Poe's tales, as opposed to Bulwer-Lytton's novel, usually present experience closer to our perception of it, and thus, according to Genette's terminology, Bulwer-Lytton's omniscient narrator turns into Poe's homodiegetic, or even, an autodiegetic narrator.

All in all, Bulwer-Lytton's novel and Poe's tales bear resemblance in terms of topic and style, while they differ in their treatment in terms of development of characters, restrictions of time and place, the complexity of the plot, the emphasis on facts and ideas, and obviously, their differing taste for synthesis. Alberto Moravia successfully summarises the features attached to both the novel and the short story claiming that

> the short story is distinguished from the novel in the following ways: non-ideological *characters* of whom we get foreshortened and tangential glimpses in accord with the needs of an action limited in *time and place*; a very simple *plot*, even nonexistent in some short stories – when they become prose poems – and in any case one that gets its complexity from life and not from the orchestration of some kind of ideology; psychology in function of *facts*, not of ideas; technical procedures intended to provide in *synthesis* what, in the novel, needs long and extended analysis (151).

Likewise, in his seminal essay, *The Philosophy of the Short-Story*, Matthews argued that "the dominance of the three-decker novel had 'killed the short-story in England', while in France and America conditions had favoured the development of the short-fiction which was different in kind, not merely in length, from the novel" (Shaw 4). Matthews went on to state that in the late nineteenth-century, English writers lacked the tradition of storytelling as an instinctive literary art, and the main reason that accounted for this was the dominance of the Victorian novel. Similarly, Shaw claims that the rise of the short story in England was closely linked with the emergence of the modern artist and the arousal of anti-Victorianism in the widest sense towards the end of the nineteenth-century. Furthermore, Pritchett suggests that the "essentially poetic" quality of the literature produced under tense pioneering conditions in America has nothing to do with the literary polish which characterises the Victorian novel, since the origins of American literature stem its power from something "raw and journalistic" (Shaw 5).

Hanson argued that "the novel can still adhere to the classical concept of civilized society, of man as an animal who lives in a community, as in Jane Austen and Trollope it obviously does; but the short story remains by its very nature remote from society – romantic, individualistic, and intransigent" (Hernáez 55). Other critics such as Gordimer or O'Connor have alluded to the short story as the narrative form which almost exclusively focuses on showing the marginality of society. Similarly, Baym argues that "detailed, circumstantial portrayals of some aspect of American life are also, peculiarly, inappropriate" (3), and that, "the novel in America diverges from its classic [i.e. British] intention which is the investigation of the problem of reality beginning in the social field" (5), since "the essential quality of America comes to reside in its unsettled wilderness and the opportunities that such a wilderness offers to the individual as the medium on which he may inscribe, unhindered, his own destiny and his own nature" (6). Thus, the Victorian novel was rooted in the individual as a social member and his endeavours in society, whereas, the origins of the American short-story lay in the individual and his relationship with an alien environment. The English social hierarchy and its obsession with order gave way to the detailed and extensive Victorian novels, whereas the origins of a new life in a new country prompted the development of a more intimate, though limited-in-length and less assuring type of composition such as the short story. According to Stroud, it was precisely Poe who, through his theory and practice, "promoted the idea of selecting episodes and words which contributed to a single mood and thus permitted the short story to compete with the Victorian lyric" (117).

Consequently, it seems that "the nature of the nineteenth-century novel in England was such as to make it very difficult for the short story as we

know it to flourish or even to exist [since] it was too deeply entrenched in English cultural life [and thus] its supremacy was unchallenged" (Allen 11). Likewise, some other dichotomies have contributed to establishing national idiosyncrasies between the novel as a predominantly European genre and the short–story as a deeply-rooted American form: Charles E. May's metaphoric motivation in the short story and the metonymic nature of the novel (1998); Mary Louise Pratt's definition of the short story as an unmarked form and the novel as the marked form in America (Leitch 143); and finally, Suzanne Ferguson's dichotomy between "the short story's focus on 'being' rather than the 'becoming' that characterises the plot of the Romantic and the Victorian novel" (Ferguson 191). Thus, from the origins of the short-story in America, particularly after the recent independence of the United States from England, there was an ongoing debate to claim national rights over both forms of composition, the novel and the short-story. This transatlantic link is particular exemplified through the literary relationship between the Victorian writer Bulwer-Lytton and Edgar Allan Poe. At this stage, Bulwer-Lytton's influence on Poe seems undeniable. Nevertheless, the thematic links established between both authors were rendered through the different forms that characterised their respective nations at that time, the novel and the short-story, and from a different national point of view, being both representative of their own time and society.

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[1] This sign (?) implies this particular text has been attributed to Poe.